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Canada and Home Rule.

(Abridged from Mr. John Redmond's Speech to the Young Scots' Society in Glasgow, November 29th, 1907.)

When Queen Victoria ascended the Throne Canadians were in armed rebellion against England. When the British Government of that day ordered "Te Deums" to be sung in Canadian Churches, to celebrate her accession, the congregations rose en masse and left the buildings.

Fifty years later, at Queen Victoria's Jubilee, Englishmen would hardly believe that Canada was ever disaffected.

What caused the change?

The grant of Home Rule to Canada, while Canada was still seething with unrest.

There is nothing exceptional in this. In Australia and Cape Colony, as in Canada, self-government was conceded after great and menacing movements, breaking into rebellion and bloodshed. But the case of Canada is that which offers the completest resemblance to the symptoms which prevail in Ireland, and, therefore, the completest argument for applying the same cure.

In Canada, as in Ireland, there were two races, and two religions. The British, settlers of a more recent date, exercised a political ascendency in favour of their own race, and the Protestant religion. The minority claimed, as it claims in Ireland, to make its will prevail over that of the majority. Lord Durham, in his famous report, says :—"The English look upon the French with contempt. . . . The French look upon the English with alarm, with jealousy, and, finally, with hatred."

Supporters of ascendency in Canada used precisely the same arguments against Canadian Home Rule as are used in the case of Ireland. **The Duke of Wellington said that—"Local responsible government and the sovereignty of Great Britain were completely incompatible." History has confuted the Duke.**

Lord Stanley said in the House of Lords :—

"What would be the consequences (of granting the Canadian demand)?. The establishment of a republic—the concession would remove the only check to the tyrannical power of the dominant majority—a majority in numbers only, while in wealth, education, and enterprise they are greatly inferior to the minority. The minority of the settlers are of British descent, and one thing is certain, if these settlers find themselves deprived of British protection they will protect themselves."

Canada has not moved a step towards separation, nor towards republican institutions. Yet Canada is divided only by an imaginary line from the greatest Republic in the world, and could, if it rebelled, only be conquered with the utmost difficulty. **The tie of free association within the Empire has held in the face of the strongest natural and political attraction.**

In the case of Ireland, what did Grattan say? "The sea denies us union, but the ocean forbids separation."

In Canada there has been no hint of civil war, nor has the Catholic majority oppressed the Protestant minority. Sir Wilfred Laurier, the French Catholic Premier, is trusted by the Protestants of Ontario no less than by the Catholics of Quebec. **The cause of sectarian bitterness was not theological difference, but the unfair predominance given to one creed identified with one political party.**

Lord Durham said:—"The Bench, the magistracy, the high places in the Episcopal Church, and a great part of the legal profession, are filled by this party; by grant or purchase, they have acquired nearly the whole of the unoccupied lands of the province; they are all-powerful in the chartered banks, and, till lately, they share among themselves exclusively all offices of trust and profit. The principal members of this party belong to the Church of England, and maintenance of the claims of that Church has always been one of their distinguishing characteristics."

This applies literally to Ireland.

Again, with regard to the administration of justice, Lord Durham wrote:—"**The public have no security for any fairness in the selection of juries.** There was no check on the sheriff. The public knew he could pack a jury whenever he pleased, and supposed that an officer holding a lucrative appointment at the pleasure of the Government would be ready to carry into effect their designs."

Jury-packing in Canada, as in Ireland, was caused by refusal of the juries to convict. In September, 1837, the Governor-General, Lord Gosford, wrote:—

"In two recent instances, where the Attorney-General preferred bills of indictment in the Court of King's Bench at Montreal, one against a Dr. Duchesnois, for publicly tearing, and treating with contempt, the proclamation issued by me on the 15th June last, and another against a certain individual in the county of the Two Mountains, for a conspiracy to drive out of the county, by means of threats, and acts of violence, several inhabitants, because they held opposite political opinions, the bills have been ignored by the Grand Jury, in the face of the strongest evidence."

Lord Gosford was a Coercionist, and **his picture of Canada in 1837 is the Tory picture of Ireland to-day.**

"The Papineau faction are not to be satisfied with any concession that does not place them in a more favourable position to carry into effect their

ulterior objects, namely, the separation of this country from England, and the establishment of a Republican form of Government."

His **Attorney-General describes boycotting:—**

"A system of proscription, based upon national distinctions and political prejudices, was adopted and pursued. The British inhabitants, and those loyal Canadians who adhered to the political principles of their British fellow-subjects, perceived on a sudden that all intercourse between them and those of their neighbours who professed a different political opinion, was studiously denied, all interchange of the ordinary offices or the common necessaries of life had abruptly terminated; they had incurred the penalty of social excommunication."

Also intimidation, and even cattle-driving:

"Mobs assembled by night, and with shouts of intimidation and threats of personal violence endeavoured to terrify the loyal inhabitants into an adoption of their principles. The house of one, Jean Baptiste Cleval, was fired into. . . . The British subjects (settlers) were also subjected to a series of harassing annoyances—their fences were broken down, their cattle driven astray, their horses cropped and otherwise disfigured, and a variety of petty injuries inflicted."

He attributes these symptoms, as the Irish Tories do, to "the artful and unscrupulous misrepresentation with which they (the agitators) delude and excite their more ignorant countrymen."

Yet in the face of all this, Canada's demand was conceded. Her demand was for full Home Rule—a legislature with an executive responsible to it. **She had tried a half-measure,** a Parliament without power to choose and control its own ministry, and from this disintegration and disloyalty had arisen. **The complete concession of freedom was followed by complete loyalty.** Nor is that all. **Prosperity replaced misery.** Lord Durham wrote:—"The present evil is not merely that improvement is stayed, and that the wealth and population of these Colonies do not increase according to the rapid scale of American progress. No accession of population takes place by immigration, and no capital is brought into the country. On the contrary, both the people and the capital seem to be quitting these distracted provinces."

To-day, Canada is united, harmonious, peaceful, and prosperous. **Canada to-day asks Home Rule for Ireland** (by repeated resolutions of her Parliament) **in the interests of the Empire.** Australia does the same.

EVERY SELF-GOVERNING COLONY IS IN FAVOUR OF HOME RULE FOR IRELAND BECAUSE EACH KNOWS THAT IF IT WERE GOVERNED AS IRELAND IS, IT WOULD BE, AS IRELAND IS, DISCONTENTED AND MISERABLE, AND THAT, IF IRELAND WERE FREE WITHIN THE EMPIRE, AS THE SELF-GOVERNING COLONIES ARE, FREE, IRELAND WOULD BE, AS THEY ARE, PROSPEROUS AND CONTENTED.

The whole case that this leaflet is written to state cannot be better concluded than by an extract from the speech which Sir Edward Grey delivered on Friday, April 19th, 1907, in the presence of the Colonial Premiers, with reference to the grant of Home Rule to the Transvaal :—

"The history of our relations with our self-governing colonies had been a great chapter in the history of freedom. Freedom gave to self-governing colonies the power to develop their countries, and what was more important, the special excellencies of their race and character, in the environment of the country in which they lived. *That was a great gift—the power to develop—which freedom gave. But it had another gift—namely, that of healing.* In the history of one of our great colonies, we had already seen how it could heal wounds and strife, and bring races together, and we were confident, in our latest self-governing colony, the healing gift of freedom would be equally potent, and we all felt that the tie between the mother country and the Colonies was now one which combined the advantages of union with the privileges of independence."

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